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ABSTRACT

This digest focuses on administrative skills useful to the supervision of counselors. The administrator of a supervision program is defined as the person ultimately responsible for the quality of supervision provided and the effectiveness of the supervisory staff. A section on program management notes that administrators provide leadership and direction to supervision programs by developing and upholding the program mission and the goals of supervision. Administrative skills necessary to accomplish this are: political and communication skills; the ability to conduct effective and efficient meetings; and the responsibility for setting workable procedures and rules. Administrators of supervision should have the knowledge and skills needed to provide leadership to the supervision program staff, as well as the counseling program staff members. The roles of the administrator in managing personnel issues are identified. The digest concludes that appropriate training needs to be provided for counseling supervisors and extended for administrators of counseling supervision programs. Contains 4 references. (NB)

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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON Counseling And Student Services

ERIC DIGEST

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Administrative Skills in Counseling Supervision

Patricia Henderson

The administrator of a supervision program is the person ultimately responsible for the quality of supervision provided and the effectiveness of supervisory staff. Conceptually, the supervision "program" includes not only the staff of supervisors, but also the activities they do, outcomes they strive to help their supervisees achieve, materials and resources they use, and means by which the activities, outcomes, and staff performance are evaluated. Administrators of supervision programs include school system, central office-based guidance directors who administer the supervision activities of campus-based counseling department heads; counselor-owners of private practices with multiple counselor supervisors; heads of counselor education departments with multiple faculty members supervising intern and practicum students; and counselor educators responsible for field-site practicum and internship supervisors of their students.

Program Management

Administrators provide leadership and direction to supervision programs by developing and upholding the program mission and the goals of supervision. To ensure effective implementation of the program (and the related counseling activities), administrators must know and be able to articulate for the staff and others the purpose, value, and goals of supervision, including its contribution to the quality of the counseling program. Essential here are knowledge of and commitment to the professional standards of counseling performance, ethics (American Counseling Association, 1988), and supervision (Dye & Borders, 1990), as well as the relevant legal standards. Administrators must be able to articulate how supervision relates to performance evaluation and to other professional development activities. They need to be able to facilitate the establishment of program priorities and to assist counselors and/or supervisors in establishing relevant objectives which not only will maintain the program, but also cause its improvement.

Administrators need to help supervisors be clear about the priority of supervision in relation to other aspects of their jobs. Supervisors of school or agency counseling departments with multiple counselors often have counseling caseloads in addition to supervision responsibilities. Counselor educators often carry teaching or advisement responsibilities in addition to supervising practicum and internship students.

Administrators not only are accountable for the provision of high quality supervision, they also are accountable for resultant improvement in the performance of supervisees/counselors, and ultimately for assuring effective treatment for clients. Based on their evaluations of supervisors' competence, administrators have a responsibility to match supervisors and counselors for optimum professional development, and for establishing efficient systems for matching counselors and clients for optimum personal development. They also must be able to develop, with supervisors, the system for monitoring client progress. Establishing systems that are not burdensome to the staff is often a challenge to the administrator. Writing skills are needed for documentation and for reporting.

In a "business manager" role, the administrator needs skills in acquiring and allocating resources needed for effective and efficient program implementation. Specifically, administrators pursue sufficient budgets, adequate materials, appropriate facilities, and equipment. Managing the supervision program entails handling logistics, such as scheduling to match clients and counselors, counselors and supervisors, making good use of facilities and equipment, and efficiently using time. Administrative skill requisites include being able to develop plans for supervision activities on a yearly, a semester, or perhaps a weekly basis.

Administrators must have the political and communication skills necessary to establish or collaborate with those who establish the policies that support the program and enhance the supervision efforts. They also are responsible for setting workable procedures and rules. They must know how to conduct effective and efficient meetings. Administrators help others in and out of the department to know the value of and best practices within counseling supervision.

Personnel Management

Administrators of supervision should have the knowledge and skills needed to provide leadership to the supervision program staff, as well as the counseling program staff members. "Personnel" within the responsibility of the supervision administrator may include supervisors, supervisees, support staff, and clients. Ideally, supervision administrators are or have been exemplary supervisors (and counselors) and are well-grounded in the knowledge, skills, and experiences of effective counseling supervision. They have developed their own models of supervision and know its steps, procedures, and a wide repertoire of techniques. It is beneficial if adminis-

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trators model these and other basic skills to better assure such skills in the supervisors and counselors within their responsibility.

Supervisors and their administrators are involved in relationships with a myriad of dynamics. Prerequisite to skilled administration is having the interpersonal skills necessary to counsel, supervise, and administer such a relationship-based program. Relationships develop and interactions occur between clients and counselors, between counselors and supervisors, and between supervisors and their administrator. These relationships should be characterized by mutual respect, two-way interactions, and a collaborative spirit.

Administrators establish the climates within which their programs operate. Their values are reflected in the program and by the supervisory staff. If they value ethical practice, the worth and dignity of each individual, such are the values of the department, agency, or business. If their personal interactions are characterized by trust and respect, those become hallmarks of the interpersonal climate of the staff. A collaborative leadership style sets a different climate than an authoritarian one.

Usually, program administrators are protectors of the rights of the supervisors, supervisees, other staff members, and clients. They need skills to intervene if needed. Dissatisfied clients, having first discussed their issues with their counselors and then the supervisors, may bring their appeals to administrators. Thus, administrators must listen well and evaluate cases and disputes fairly.

Supervision administrators typically have traditional personnel responsibilities for the supervisors. They need skills in recruitment, hiring, placement, orientation, and induction of new supervisors. They need to be able to write and to clarify job descriptions of the supervisors. Given the dearth of supervisor training, today's supervision administrator needs to be able to train new supervisors as well as provide inservice training for those with experience (Borders et al., 1991; Henderson & Lampe, 1992). They assist supervisors in choosing appropriate supervision methodology when they are faced with problematic supervisees (e.g., those in burn-out, stress, conflict, or who are incompetent). As with the other supervision skills outlined in the Standards (Dye & Borders, 1990), administrators must be able to match their own administrative behaviors to the needs of their "administratees."

Supervision administrators both supervise and evaluate supervisor performance and suggest goals for supervisors' professional development. As is often true with supervisors and supervisees, these responsibilities may appear to the supervisor ("administratee") to overlap or even be in conflict. Administrators need to be clear as to which role they are fulfilling in any given situation. They need to be able to distinguish between formative supervision and summative performance evaluation. They need to be able to evaluate fairly and to provide constructive criticism.

Finally, supervision administrators need to pursue their own meaningful professional development. Administrators are professional models to their staff members, and should exemplify excellence in counseling and supervisory as well as administrative professional knowledge and skills.

Issues

As both counseling and counseling supervision are developing disciplines, so too is the administration of counseling supervision. Appropriate training, based on the ACES-developed *Curriculum Guide* (Borders et al., 1991), needs to be provided for counseling supervisors and extended for administrators of counseling supervision programs. When training is accessible, appropriate certification and licensing requirements need to be established. Perhaps before all of that can happen, more discussion of the topic needs to occur in the profession.

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